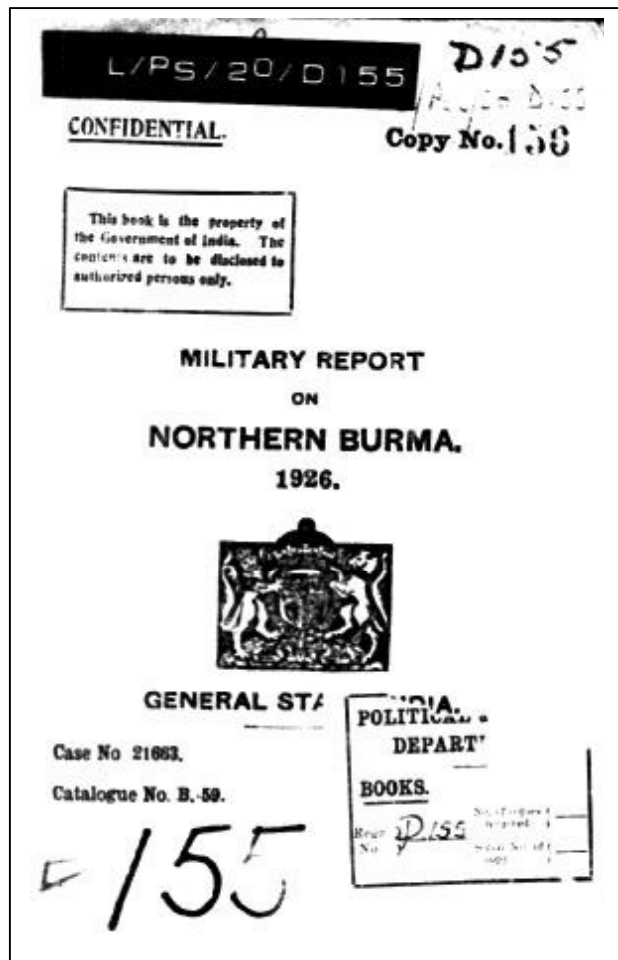


Delineating British Burma

British Confidential and Official Print, c. 1826-1949



- Uniquely complete set: gazetteers and reports
- Secret and confidential reports, international boundaries
- WW II, Government in exile
- Burma Gazetteer, 1906-1925

Editor: A.J. Farrington, Former Deputy Director, Oriental & India Office Collections (OIOC, now part of the Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections), British Library, London

Delineating British Burma

This collection of official and confidential print reflects the long process of information gathering, codification, and dissemination that both accompanied and followed on from the three stages of the British annexation of Burma. It combines the kind of Intelligence Branch investigations that were routinely produced for the states bordering on British India, with a uniquely complete set of gazetteers/topographical works and reports covering the districts and states of British Burma and its boundaries.

The three wars

The collection begins (**BIB-1**) with contemporary accounts and official histories of the three wars of 1824-1826, 1852-1854, and 1885-1886. At the conclusion of the 1st War in 1826, Assam, Arakan, and Tenasserim were annexed to the East India Company's territories. Assam never became part of British Burma, while Arakan was transferred to the government of Bengal and Tenasserim was placed under the direct control of the Governor-General at Calcutta.

After the 2nd War, the Company annexed Pegu and Martaban, thus taking control of the whole of Lower Burma. In 1862, Tenasserim, Pegu, and Martaban were constituted as British Burma, a new province of British India, each under a Commissioner responsible to the Chief Commissioner at Rangoon, who answered directly to the Governor-General. Independent Burma was now a land-locked state, under constant pressure from the British in the south, especially commercial interests seeking new routes into China.

New territories

On January 1st, 1886, the province of British Burma was more than doubled in size by the final annexation of the kingdom of Burma, although sporadic fighting continued until 1889. As the new territories were divided into four commissionerships and Pegu had meanwhile been split into two, British Burma now comprised eight commissioner's divisions, headed by the Chief Commissioner with a growing administrative secretariat at Rangoon.

The Chief Commissioner was replaced in 1897 by a Lieutenant-Governor, who was assisted by a Legislative Council, enabling Burma-specific legislation to be enacted for the first time under British rule. From January 2nd, 1923, responsibility for a wide range of functions (but excluding, for example, defense and external relations) was devolved to the Government of Burma.

Subordination to India ended with a new constitution, which took effect on April 1st, 1937. The constitution created a Senate – half of which was to be nominated by the Governor – and an elected House of Representatives. The Governor now answered not to India, but to a Secretary of State for Burma in London (although the office was held by whoever was Secretary of State for India).

During the Japanese invasion, the British and Indian elements in the administration retreated to India and set up a Government of Burma in exile at Simla. This government returned in October 1945 to find that power has already passed to the Burmese nationalists. British rule formally ended on January 4th, 1948, and Burma became an independent republic.

Delineating the territories

The first general gazetteer, of 1879, covered Lower Burma only (**BIB-2**). The second, of 1883, covered Lower Burma and independent Burma, and was followed in 1900-1901 by a massive (3,000-page) compilation, which also included the Shan states. There are also handbooks and a gazetteer issued for war-time use by the government in exile at Simla.

Military reports and route books (**BIB-3**) were produced by the Intelligence Branch at military headquarters in India, and latterly by South-East Asia Command. The route book, which was first issued in 1903, was divided into four parts, namely northern, north-eastern, western, and southern and the Shan states. In the war-time issues, routes labeled C, D, G, H, L, and M survive.

Attempts to define the boundaries of British Burma (**BIB-4**) – an issue that still engages Burma, China, and Thailand – began after the first territorial annexation of 1826, but did not reach the status of an international agreement until the 1890s. The collection has secret/confidential reports from the Anglo-Siamese Commission of 1892-

1893, the Amherst (i.e. Tenasserim)-Siam Commission of 1894-1896, the Burma-China Commission of 1894-1899, and the Sino-British Commission of 1935-1936.

The *Burma Gazetteer* (**BIB-5**) provides a highly detailed, multi-volume account of early twentieth-century British Burma, compiled by the district officers. The *Gazetteer* is divided into Part A – which comprises monographs on, for example, the history, geography, administration, and economic life of each district – and Part B, which contains tables of statistics. There are **A** volumes for 26 districts only, produced between 1910 and 1935. The **B** volumes of statistics appear in three editions, which were published after the census returns of 1901, 1911, and 1921. These are:

1906-1907: 36 volumes (the China Hills and Shan and Karenni states are not included);
1912-1913: 42 volumes, numbered 1-42;
1924-1925: 42 volumes, numbered 1-43 (Rangoon, vol. 5 in 1912, omitted).
Included in this section are a number of other works relating to particular districts or states that do not form part of the *Burma Gazetteer* series.

Provenance and historical background

The various "Secret," "Confidential," or "For Official Use Only" works are located in two internal reference libraries, which accumulated within the Military Department (**L/MIL/17**) and the Political & Secret Department (**L/P&S/20**) at the India Office in London. Items were received both from Military Intelligence in India and from the Government of Burma. Custody rules for volumes held "in the field" dictated that when a new edition of a particular work appeared, all previous editions had to be destroyed. As a result, these works in their various issues survive in very few locations. The collection in the India Office Records at the British Library, now made available by IDC Publishers, is unique in its breadth and accessibility.

The non-classified works (V/27), mainly the volumes of the *Burma Gazetteer*, are part of the large collection of official publications managed by the Registry & Records Department at the India Office. All the India Office departments were subsumed within the Commonwealth Relations Office (subsequently the

Foreign & Commonwealth Office) after India, Pakistan, and Burma became independent in 1947-1948. In 1982, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office transferred the administration of the India Office Library & Records to the British Library, where it now forms one part of the Library's Asia, Pacific, and

Africa Collections (specifically, the former Oriental & India Office Collections; OIOC).

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Organisation of the print

For the present publication the material has been arranged in five groups.

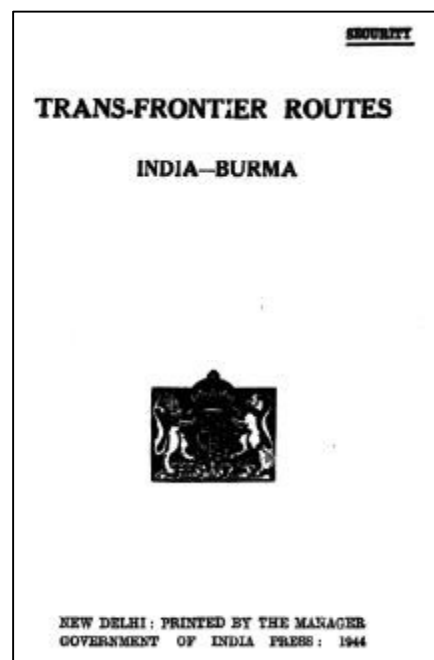
- BIB-1 The British Conquest, 1827-1905
- BIB-2 Gazetteers and handbooks, 1879-1944
- BIB-3 Military Reports and Route Books, 1903-1945
- BIB-4 Boundaries: Reports and Examinations, 1892-1937
- BIB-5 Reports on Districts and States, 1868-1936

Within these groups **the following information is provided for each item:**

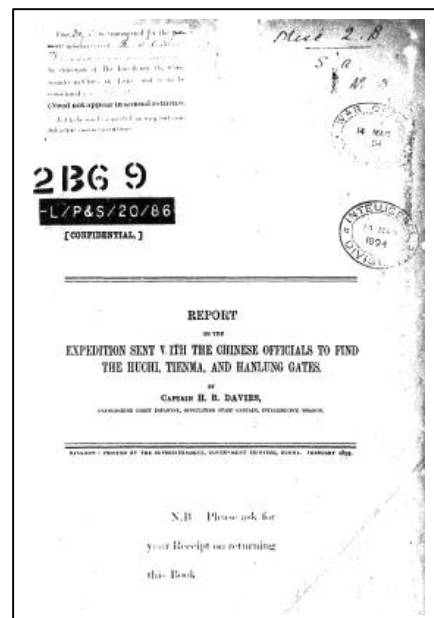
- fiche number(s)
- title, author/issuing body, publications details, pagination etc
- OIOC reference number

General information

Scope	Approx. 20,000 exposures
Number of fiche	426
OR Number of reels	41
Size of fiche	105 x 148 mm.
Size of reel	35 mm.
Film type	Positive silver halide
Reduction ratio	Varies depending on the size of the original
Internal finding aids	Eye-legible headers on every fiche, file targets on all reels
External finding aids	Including online EAD finding aid at www.idc.nl



Trans-frontier routes, India-Burma. New Delhi, 1944. *Security*. L/MIL/17/19/12



Report on the Anglo-French Buffer State Commission, 1894-95. Rangoon: 1895. *Secret*. L/P&S/20/83

Cover illustration from: Military report on northern Burma. Simla, 1926 *Confidential* L/P&S/20/D155

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RUSSIAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ON ASIA

From the Russian State Military Archive (RGVIA), Moscow

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- A threat from the Far East: Files on China, Japan, Korea
- East Question: Files on Turkey, Palestine, Arabia and Syria

All the works were classified *Secret*, *Confidential* or *For Official Use*. Most of the documents cover the period of the second half of the 19th century - the beginning of the 20th century (till 1917). The collection also includes documents dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries. Documents are in various European and Oriental languages.

- 12 titles
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RUSSIAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ON ASIA

Confidential Prints, 1883-1913

The publication includes confidential print on Russia's Asian borders and neighbours. Approximately half of the issues were devoted to East Asia (Siberia and the adjacent states): China, Manchuria, Tibet, Mongolia, Japan, Korea. Others contain published materials on Central Asia and Middle East (data on the countries adjoining the Caucasus): Turkestan, Afghanistan, Tibet, India, Persia, Turkey.

- Approximately 100 volumes
- Approximately 550 microfiche
- **This collection will also be available online**

